

DRIVING TECHNIQUES

STARTING: Accelerate carefully. Take it slowly and easily.

TAKING CURVES: Stay close to the middle of your lane.

TURNING

RIGHT TURN: Look in your right mirror. Signal, slow down. If turn is sharp, move ahead until the car's front wheels are well ahead of curb... then turn to the right.

LEFT TURN: Check traffic. Signal. Proceed slowly. When you make your turn, drive well into intersection in order to swing wide, to allow for the trailer.

SLOWING, STOPPING: A sudden stop can jackknife your trailer or shift your load, so keep a greater distance than normally between you and the car ahead. Keep out of the fast lanes and maintain a speed that makes sudden stops and slow-ups unnecessary.

PASSING: When towing a trailer you can't accelerate as fast as without it. Then too your car plus trailer is much longer. Before you pass, make sure there's enough time and room for the manoeuvre. When you have passed, allow more room before you move back to your lane. Don't cut in and swerve... this can make your trailer swing and sway.

BEING PASSED: Help other drivers pass you where necessary. If you're holding up a line of traffic, the right thing to do is to **signal, pull off, and let them pass.**

If a large bus or transport passes you, air pressure may push the rear of your trailer to the right. Almost instantly, this pressure will push the front of your trailer. Be prepared to steer out of this situation. Accelerating a bit may help. Braking will not.

BACKING: Back very slowly. Turn wheel slightly, then straighten. Steer by a series of slight turns.

BACKING TO RIGHT: Steer car to left... front end of trailer will go left, rear end will go right.

BACKING TO LEFT: Steer car to right.

LOADING

Consider the size, power and condition of your car before you attempt to tow a trailer.

Don't overload: Besides putting a strain on you and your towing vehicle, you are inviting tire, wheel bearing and axle failures on your trailer with too much weight. When carrying a boat on a trailer, do not carry cargo in the boat unless your trailer is designed and equipped for the extra weight.

Tires: Do not load tires beyond manufacturer's rated capacities. Rated capacities go from 265 kg (590 lbs.) based on size and load rating "A" to 685 kg (1,510 lbs.) based on size and load rating "E".

Wheel Bearings: When installing a wheel after repacking its bearings with grease, don't tighten the spindle nut too much, as this may cause bearing failure and loss of a wheel. A slight looseness in the bearings is better than being too tight.

The trailer weight on the hitch should be in accordance with the trailer manufacturer's recommendation. This, combined with a properly-positioned hitch-ball on the rear of the towing vehicle, should permit the trailer to ride level.

Your trailer will "fish-tail" if the weight is not distributed properly.

Distribute load evenly... keep weight as low on the floor as possible and as nearly as possible directly over the axle. Heavy and improperly placed loads can pull down the rear of your towing vehicle. This lifts the front end and headlights, so that your low beams may blind approaching drivers. Mirrors are thrown out-of-line and steering may be affected too.

Strap everything down, inside as well as outside the trailer.



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IT'S THE LAW

Here is a brief outline of the laws relating to the operation of trailers in Ontario. For more detailed information, refer to the Ontario Highway Traffic Act and Regulations.

REGISTRATION

Your trailer is considered a separate vehicle from your automobile. Before you use it on a street or highway, you must register it and pay the registration fee to the Ontario Ministry of Transportation and Communications.

Your trailer registration plate must be fastened on the back of your trailer so that it is clearly visible.

DRIVER LICENSING

Under Ontario's Classified Driver Licensing system, which came into effect February 1, 1978, a driver with a Class "G" licence may operate any motor vehicle or combination of vehicles up to 8200 kg (18,000 lbs.) Registered Gross Weight or Gross Vehicle Weight, provided the towed vehicles are not over 4500 kg (10,000 lbs.) Gross Vehicle Weight.

SIZE

No vehicle, including load, shall have a greater height than 4.15 metres; a greater width than 2.6 metres or a maximum length of 12.5 metres unless it is a fire apparatus, a semi-trailer, or a bus. No combination of vehicles, including load, coupled together, shall exceed the total length of 21 metres.

Should your combination of vehicles and load exceed the above limits, you must secure an Oversize Permit for its operation from the Oversize-Overweight Permit Office of any District Office of the Ontario Ministry of Transportation and Communications.

BRAKES

If your trailer has a gross weight (vehicle and load) of 1360 kg (3000 pounds) or more, it must have brakes strong enough to stop and hold it.

Since stopping distances increase even when towing a smaller trailer you may find that a trailer grossing less than 1360 kg (3,000 pounds) may require brakes, especially if towed by a light vehicle.

LIGHTS AND REFLECTORS

On a highway at any time when lights are required by law, your trailer registration plate must be illuminated by a white light. Your trailer must have one red lighted lamp on the rear.

IN ADDITION

If your trailer is not wider than 2.05 m (80 inches), it must have an approved red reflector on the left rear.

If your trailer is wider than 2.05 m (80 inches) it must have two lighted clearance lamps, one on each side of the front, which display an amber light, and two lighted clearance lamps, one on each side of the rear, which display a red light. (Ministry-approved reflectors may be used instead of the rear clearance lights). All such lamps and reflectors must be affixed within 150 mm (6 inches) of the side of the vehicle.

Also, it must be equipped with mechanical or electrical turn signalling devices and stopping lamp or lamps.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

- Your trailer must be equipped with mudguards, fenders, flap(s) or body structure to reduce road spray.
- You must load carefully to ensure that nothing comes loose or falls off while you are moving.
- If the load obstructs your vision to the rear, you must have a mirror attached to the car in a position to provide a clear view of the roadway to the rear other than through the rear window.
- Under a regulation effective January 1, 1978, the size of side mirrors on motor vehicles, other than commercial vehicles is limited. No driver may operate a motor vehicle on the highway with outside mirrors extending more than 30.5 cm (12 inches) from the widest part of the vehicle, except when towing another vehicle or trailer.
- It is against the law to draw more than one vehicle behind your car.
- You must ensure that your trailer is in a safe operating condition. A Police Constable may remove vehicles from the road until they are put in a safe operating condition.
- Your trailer must have two separate means of attachment so that, if one fails, the trailer will not become detached.
- It is against the law to carry anyone in a house or boat trailer when it is being operated on a highway.

HITCH

Use a good trailer hitch. The hitch-ball should be installed so that when the trailer is attached and tightened, it rides on a horizontal plane with no tilting. If the hitch pulls down the rear of your car, ask your dealer to supply you with a load equalizing trailer hitch. It may be possible to shift some load in the trailer rearward to reduce the load on the rear of the car.

Be sure the trailer hitch is securely attached to your tow vehicle in accordance with the vehicle manufacturer's recommendation, the correct class of ball and coupling is used to match the gross trailer weight, the coupler is adjusted to fit snugly on the ball, and safety chains or cables with strength equal to the gross weight of the trailer are installed so as to support the trailer tongue in case of accidental ball and coupling disconnection.

Ball couplings are classified as follows:

Class 1: up to 900 kg (2,000 pounds) GTW

Class 2: over 900 kg (2,000 pounds) and not over 1600 kg (3,500 pounds) GTW

Class 3: over 1600 kg (3,500 pounds) and not over 2250 kg (5,000 pounds) GTW

Class 4: over 2250 kg (5,000 pounds) and not over 4500 kg (10,000 pounds) GTW

Distribute load evenly...keep weight as low on the floor as possible, and, as nearly as possible directly over the axle.

In boat towing, place the heaviest load where the hull support is greatest...usually directly over the keel. Be sure the rollers and hull supports are adjusted to give even support at all points. Uneven support can damage the hull.

When not towing a vehicle, the car registration plate must be clearly visible. Do not obscure the plate with the hitch.